

# Tough Guy Meets His Match

By AT1 Somkit Carter

Finishing up on the last gripe to prepare for my detachment's participation in SUSTEX II, I was working on the SH-60B's weapons delivery system and had determined the culprit was a bad armament signal data converter. I received the part at the last minute and wanted to install and test it one last time before going home. I should have waited and not rushed.

I ran the part out to the helicopter, which sat on the flight line, and installed it in the seat well. I then walked over to the power cord, unraveled it, and pulled it over to the aircraft's power receptacle. I always made it a habit to check both ends of the receptacles, looking for FOD or damage before plugging it into the aircraft. This time, I noticed some debris on top of the power-cord plug. You already might see where this story is going.

I brushed off the debris with my left hand, assuming that power was off because the cord still was reeled up. Needless to say, I got "bitten." My pinky finger had touched one of the contacts, sending electricity up my arm. I evaluated myself and decided I was OK, since I wasn't dead. I plugged in the power cord and continued work. My junior AT and I ran up the aircraft weapon systems and finished the paperwork, detailing the work that had been completed on the aircraft.

Having all but forgotten the shock incident, I left the hangar and went home to be with my family before deploying for our work up. All was well until I woke up the next morning. It felt like I had struck the funny bone in my left arm. I didn't think anything about it and assumed I simply had banged my elbow while sleeping. The day went on, and the tingling sensation in my left arm eventually went away. The same thing hap-



pened the next morning, though, and that's when I finally made the connection to my run-in with the power cord two days earlier.

I was supposed to muster that next morning at 0730 to fly off to Norfolk to embark our ship. I immediately notified my chief about what had happened and that I still felt the effects of the electricity. He sent me straight to the hospital for a check up, while my detachment boarded the C-9 to Norfolk.

I was trying to be a tough guy and to avoid this whole situation. Had medical deemed me not fit for duty, the squadron

would have had to find another qualified AT to send out as a replacement. As it turned out, a doctor released me fit for duty. I now had to get to Norfolk before the ship pulled out.

Anyone qualified to work with or around electricity must understand the hazards that exist. We shouldn't assume we will get zapped sooner or later. It may be inevitable, but we should strive to avoid it. Also, the correct way to handle a jolt is to report it immediately, no matter how little the pain may be. Had I seen a doctor much earlier, the situation would have been resolved on day one.

Maintainers need to verify power cords are not energized before handling them, and we never should put ourselves in a situation where we may contact an electrical lead. As a senior technician, I know better, and I always teach my juniors the proper techniques and procedures. ⚡⚡⚡

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